

# JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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## KYODAN GENERAL ASSEMBLY IS EXTRAORDINARY

The United Church of Christ in Japan held an "extraordinary" General Assembly Nov. 25-26 in which Moderator Kiyoshi Ii waived parliamentary procedure to permit a group of angry, vocal young people to interrogate church leaders, theologians, seminary professors and supporters of the Christian Pavilion at Expo '70 as to their basic theological, evangelistic and social positions and presuppositions.

The site of the Assembly, which broke in a radical way with formalized proceedings characteristic of past assemblies, was the Yamate Church in Tokyo. Some 314 elected delegates, out of 470 which were to constitute this Assembly, were joined by perhaps a hundred Protestors--from among students, seminarians, young pastors and laymen--who sat in the aisles of the main floor, occupied empty seats in the delegates' section and, with more casual observers, filled most of the 2nd and 3rd balconies.

The mood of the Assembly was set early when Protestors filed onto the floor of the Assembly during the opening worship service, and took control of the microphone during the prayer of Assembly Secretary Tomomi Kimura. The Amens at the close of the prayer were followed immediately by a blaring bull-horn declaration read by the Protestors.

When quiet was eventually restored, Moderator Kiyoshi Ii, who assumed the leadership of the 204,000-member church upon the death of the late Masahisa Suzuki in July of this year, announced that according to the registration records a quorum was present, and proceeded with his report to the Assembly.

The special General Assembly had been called upon the request of standing committee members to reconsider the bill giving moral support to the Christian Pavilion at Expo '70, passed by the 1968 General Assembly. In his opening statement, Moderator Ii stated his personal **position**: that, while he had been a party to sponsoring the bill at the previous Assembly, he had come to see that Expo '70 is involved with the government's moves in the direction of remilitarization and economic exploitation and that this the church must oppose, on the basis of its

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NORTH EAST THEOLOGICAL EDUCATORS COMPARE CURRICULA

"I expect something good to come out of the difficult period of the '70s in Japan--the Ampo age--and for this reason we must not waste this period but seek to be creative in the midst of the turmoil," Dr. Shoki Coe, director of the Theological Education Fund for East Asia of the World Council Churches, told North East Asia theological educators at Gotemba, Nov. 13-15.

The twenty-five delegates were attending the North East Asia Association of Theological Schools' meeting on Curriculum, to exchange information concerning their various local situations.

The report from Taiwan stressed the great difference between the Mountain areas and Mountain people and the Plains areas and Taiwanese. In the mountain areas more stress is put on developing the person than on theology per se whereas the focus in the Plains is on developing leadership for the seminaries and churches.

Taiwan and Japan were envious of Korea when they learned that theological education in Korea is all on the same academic level--carried on at the universities, rather than at various levels, from post-high school through graduate. The similar level facilitates regular discussions of similar problems in theological education.

Japan reported that the theological departments of universities, as well as the seminaries, are struggling in the chaos which has resulted from the rapid increase of Student Power. Because each seminary has its own unique problems, it was felt impossible to generalize on the overall situation of theological education in Japan. Japanese delegates did agree that the people who really understand are grappling with the hidden problems in the present unstable situation are the theological students and the theological faculty members. It was also felt it is very difficult to agree on any specific curriculum because of the rapidly changing social situation.

The concern of all the delegates seemed to be that the conditions Japan is now experiencing will some day occur in Taiwan and Korea; for this reason, the words of Dr. Coe must all the more be heeded throughout the schools of the Association.

NAGASHIMA CONSECRATED BISHOP OF KYOTO

Father Theodosius Nagashima, 35, was consecrated Bishop of Kyoto in a special service performed in the Nicolai-Do, the Orthodox Cathedral in Tokyo, Sunday, Nov. 2 by Bishop Vladimir of Tokyo and Archbishop John of the San Francisco Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of America.

The Nihon Harisutosu Seikyo Kai (The Japanese Orthodox Church), founded in 1880 by the Russian missionary Nickolas Kasatkin, is one of the most active Orthodox missionary churches presently under the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of America. The mission is served by 28 Japanese priests and has some 102 churches, including a number of very small ones. Some seminary students are trained in Tokyo, others study abroad. Bishop Nagashima will serve as auxiliary bishop of Tokyo.

It is anticipated that the consecration of the new bishop will lead to the establishment of an independent and autonomous Orthodox Church in Japan.

JAPANESE RELIGIONS, Vol. 6, No. 1, contains source materials for the study project, "Salvation Today," adopted at the Uppsala Conference of the Commission of World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches. The semi-annual publication of the NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions is available on a two-year, four-issue subscription basis for ¥1,000 or \$3.50 from the Center, c/o Kyoto Diocese of Japan Episcopal Church, Karasuma-Shimotachiuri, Kamikyo-ku, Kyoto, Japan.

MAN IN THE PATH OF URBANIZATION

"Problems of Human Development in the Wake of Progressing Urbanization" is the theme of the Sixth Annual NCC-sponsored Urban-Industrial Mission Conference, to be held at the newly erected Prefectural Workers Center in Chiba Jan. 27-29. The problems of living as human beings in such large-scale industrial developments as the Keiyo Industrial Area of Chiba will be the central topic. This conference will go beyond the narrow confines of occupational evangelism to take a broader look at the relationships of the Christian faith to the life of man in urban society.

The study experience will include a tour of Mitsui Shipbuilding Co. and a talk with labor and management representatives there; a lecture by Prof. Toshio Kikuchi, Chiba University, the person largely responsible for the overall plan of development in Chiba prefecture; a panel of labor, management, prefectoral development and church leaders; and group study and general discussion on the theme. In addition to the denominational and organizational delegates, others who wish to attend should contact: Stanley Manierre, Dir., Urban-Industrial Mission Comm., National Christian Council, 5-1, 4-chome, Ginza, Tokyo (Tel. (03) 567-7566).

FELLOWSHIP BETWEEN NEIGHBORS

Referring to Japan as "our nearest neighbor to the east," Metropolitan Nikodim brought greetings to Dr. Isamu Omura, chairman of the NCC, on the occasion of his visit to Japan with six other delegates from the Russian Orthodox Church in the Soviet.

Immediately upon arrival in Tokyo on Nov. 19, the party went to greet and give prayers of thanks with the small congregation of about thirty members of the Tokyo Orthodox Church. At the reception given by the NCC on Nov. 24, Metropolitan Nikodim said, "The Gospel should spread not only to the North and South but also to the East and West. But, when we mention the word 'East,' we are always reminded of the nation which is the nearest neighbor of us in the east, where pioneer missionaries have been working for some 90 years. That is Japan, and we are glad that we can keep the fellowship with the churches in Japan in today's ecumenical movement."

ALIENS' RIGHTS

An Association for the Human Rights of Aliens in Japan has been organized from the voluntary movement of Christians in Osaka who opposed the proposed Immigration Bill this summer. The thirty members include Koreans, Chinese, Japanese, and several missionaries. Organized after a meeting at Higashi-Umeda Church, addressed by Dr. In Ha Lee and Rev. Young Pok Chone (Naraji Oda), the association met on Nov. 24 with Kaoru Nakashita of the Nagoya Immigration Office.

"FELLOW WORKERS WITH GOD"

"Fellow workmen with God" is the theme of the 1970 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Jan. 18-25, when observances will be held in various cities of Japan as elsewhere throughout the world. An order of worship, prepared by the Faith and Order Secretariat of the World Council of Churches and representatives of Roman Catholic ecumenical centers for the Vatican Secretariat for Unity, has been translated into Japanese and is available in pamphlet form from the National Christian Council and National Catholic Council. In Tokyo a joint prayer service will be held Sunday, Jan. 25 at Tokyo Lutheran Church, 2-218, Nishiokubo, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, Tel. (369)5709.

KYODAN FORMULATES POSITION ON SECURITY

The struggle of the United Church of Christ in Japan to become a "peace church" could be seen in the Seminar on Security, sponsored by the Commission the Mission of the church for delegates from the sixteen districts. The three-day meeting was held in Tokyo Nov. 19-21 in the form of an intensive study meeting.

The voice of a delegate from the Okinawa district: "You are always 'feeling sorry' for the Okinawans, but you must take this up as your own problem, because we are a part of Japan," coming while Japan's Prime Minister Sato and U.S. President Richard Nixon were signing the statement on the return of Okinawa in 1972, deeply impressed many of the delegates.

The keystone of a statement to be released soon with regard to Okinawa and the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty is 1) the conviction that the Gospel calls the church to work toward establishing a community penetrated by the justice of God, and 2) the pledge of the Confession of War Responsibility, issued in 1967, to work for peace and to avoid future involvements in war.

DENOMINATIONS REPORT VARIED YOUTH MOODS

Denominational youth work representatives described the youth moods in respective churches for school executives attending the meeting of the Education Association of Christian Schools held Nov. 7, Tokyo. Reports, summarized below, suggested the variations both in degree and form of student discontent and in reactions of the various church bodies.

Lutherans: the main activity has been at the seminary level, with nine students--approximately one-fourth--having taken a position in resistance to ordination examinations. The church, realizing the need to reform some areas of church life, feels that as far as the protest movement is concerned, it involves only a small sector of the student group.

Baptist Domei: under the influence of Kanto Gakuin and Kansai area theological students, the World Assembly on Evangelism, scheduled to be held in Tokyo in 1970, is coming under an expression of the "institution" (the World Baptist Alliance) which the students, with strong rooting in the autonomy of the local Baptist congregation, feel must be "destroyed."

Baptist Remmei: things tend to be quiet here. The church had already taken the position, with regard to the Christian Pavilion at Expo '70, that it will not participate. Its reason was the inclusion of the Vatican, which it considers a nation, and which thereby violates the principle of separation of church and state.

Episcopal: there is no problem here. The position of the church tends to be conservative with regard to social issues, observing the principle of the separation of politics and religion. Student centers run by Episcopalians (and Baptists) at various college campuses have had no special difficulties.

United Church: the Kyodan has experienced the greatest turmoil, but this is seen as not unnatural for young people, particularly among Protestants, who are encouraged to do their own thinking and act accordingly. Protests against the Yasukuni Shrine nationalization bill and calls for the reformation of the church are considered essential to the very nature of Protestantism, and the act of continual reformation to be expected.

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Confession of War Responsibility and its Fundamental Policy for Evangelism and Church Renewal. He called upon this Assembly to subject the Expo '70 issue to full and thorough study.

The remaining fifteen hours of the Assembly sessions on Tuesday and Wednesday were dominated almost completely by the Protest group, under the direction of a young Doshisha Seminary graduate student, Toshihiko Kobayashi. Kobayashi conducting the interrogations, diatribes and choral cheers and jeers of the Protestors with the grace of a choir director. Inquiry took the form of questions to Assembly members not only about the Christian Pavilion but also about administrative matters, wartime activities, ministerial examinations, and theological positions with regard to evangelism, Yasukuni Shrine, and the Confession of Faith. Persons called up for questioning included Tamotsu Hasegawa, president of the Kyodan's Laymen's Association, Takeshi Takasaki and Yoshinobu Kumazawa of Tokyo Union Theological Seminary, and Katsumi Matsumura of Kwansei Gakuin Theological Seminary. Kazo Kitamori of Tokyo Union Theological Seminary, who was not present, did not respond to a request to appear.

Only one portion of the two-day session--Tuesday evening--was given to a one-for-one pro-and-con debate over the evangelistic and ecumenical meanings of the Christian Pavilion. The rest of the time, most delegates sat silently through the tirades, questioning and occasional eruptions of angry action, directed at persons who resisted, were evasive, or, in rare cases, pointedly criticized the Protestors. Some appreciated the penetrating questioning and criticism of the Protestors who were demanding living acts of faith, not empty words or abstract statements. Many resented the permissiveness towards the Protestors and the disregard for the opinions of Assembly members. And many felt greatly threatened by the angry voices.

As the scheduled adjournment hour drew near Wednesday afternoon, Ii resumed command. He said that here, for the first time in its 27 years, the Kyodan had departed from mere formalities to allow feelings and voices of young people, not usually represented at the Assembly, to be expressed. He pointed out that, as a matter of fact, nothing this Assembly could do now could stop construction of the Christian Pavilion, to be completed within a month.

"For two days, although there has been much turmoil, we can say that the Kyodan has tried, for the first time in its history, to have true discussion, freed from the yoke of the assembly system. I am convinced, and I hereby declare, that it is more important, to take the problems back home for discussion in your districts and churches and to deal with the coming struggle authentically than it is to vote in formal session." Although loud applause followed the Moderator's remarks, many first-floor delegates refrained.

Calling attention to the presence in the Assembly for the first time of delegates from Okinawa due to the merger of the churches in February, Ii asked that a protest be made with regard to the content of the recent Communiqué between Prime Minister Sato and President Nixon. A proposed statement, read by an Okinawa delegate, referred particularly to 1) the "without prejudice to the United States" clause in the provision for prior consultation under the Security Treaty; 2) the continuing pattern of discrimination toward Okinawa represented by the Communiqué's terms; and 3) the fact that the Communiqué ignores the wishes of the Okinawan people (for the removal of the bases).

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NCC GENERAL SECRETARY MASAAKI NAKAJIMA COMMENTS ON KYODAN EVENTS:

Asked to comment on the events of the Kyodan's extraordinary General Assembly reported in this issue, Rev. Masaaki Nakajima, general secretary of the National Christian Council, said:

First, I commend highly the Christian courage Mr. Ii, moderator of the Kyodan, showed in breaking the old, formalized pattern of "church-ly" assembly in order to listen attentively to what the concerned young people had to say to the "church."

I think this is the only way today for the church to be relevant to the present world situation. Although many, if not most, of the delegates, who were not accustomed to this kind of discussion and who were slow to understand the nature of the changing situation, were seriously aggravated by the whole procedure, in which the voice of the angry young people dominated, yet I felt for those who had ears to hear, the voice of God could be heard through these voices. The result, of course, is a most painful one. It may mean the collapse or the split of the Kyodan--The United Church of Christ in Japan--one of the pioneering experiments of ecumenical church union. The Lord may well be saying, "I have not come to bring peace, but a sword."

Yet, on the other hand, I think nobody is allowed to deprive the majority of the delegates, who did not applaud when they heard Mr. Ii urging them to take action against the Christian Pavilion, of the right to be called Christian and to act according to what they believe God wills. The decision of the NCCJ to support the Christian Pavilion stands as long as the Central Committee for the Christian Pavilion takes great pains and effort to reveal Christ ecumenically within the walls of Expo '70.

The NCCJ cannot avoid facing a great crisis as its largest constituency, the Kyodan, undergoes its second birth pangs, but it will also be a great challenge and opportunity for us to perform our full function of finding the way for the common witness to the world to be made, even if churches may be split over the concept of church renewal.

I would like to ask the Christians throughout the world to pray for us, fellow Christians, in Japan.

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A vote by applause was called for, with widespread but not complete response. Ii announced that following the closing prayer, the General Assembly would be adjourned.

At the close of Rev. Yoda's prayer, the Protestors' "iginashi" (no objections) rang out above the Amens of more traditional voices, and the extraordinary 16th Kyodan General Assembly closed.

The three proposed bills, one to reaffirm the previous bill approving of the Pavilion, one to reexamine the matter, and a third, to oppose the Pavilion, were never voted on, with the result that the 1968 action still stands.